

PSR

OVERVIEW

NARRATIVE REVIEW

Persona 5: Royal centers on a group of teenagers whom society has abandoned, coming together to bring about positive change. They accomplish this by traveling into the Metaverse, a world that is the physical manifestation of the inner psyche of people. Here, they battle manifestations of humanity's darkest desires using an ability referred to as Personas. Through this method, these group of teenagers, known as the Phantom Thieves, bring those who abuse their power to justice.

Persona 5: Royal has two parts:

- Main Storyline: A straightforward narrative about rebelling against the injustice of an apathetic society.
- Royal Storyline: An introspective look into what creates an apathetic society.

SUMIRE'S AWAKENING

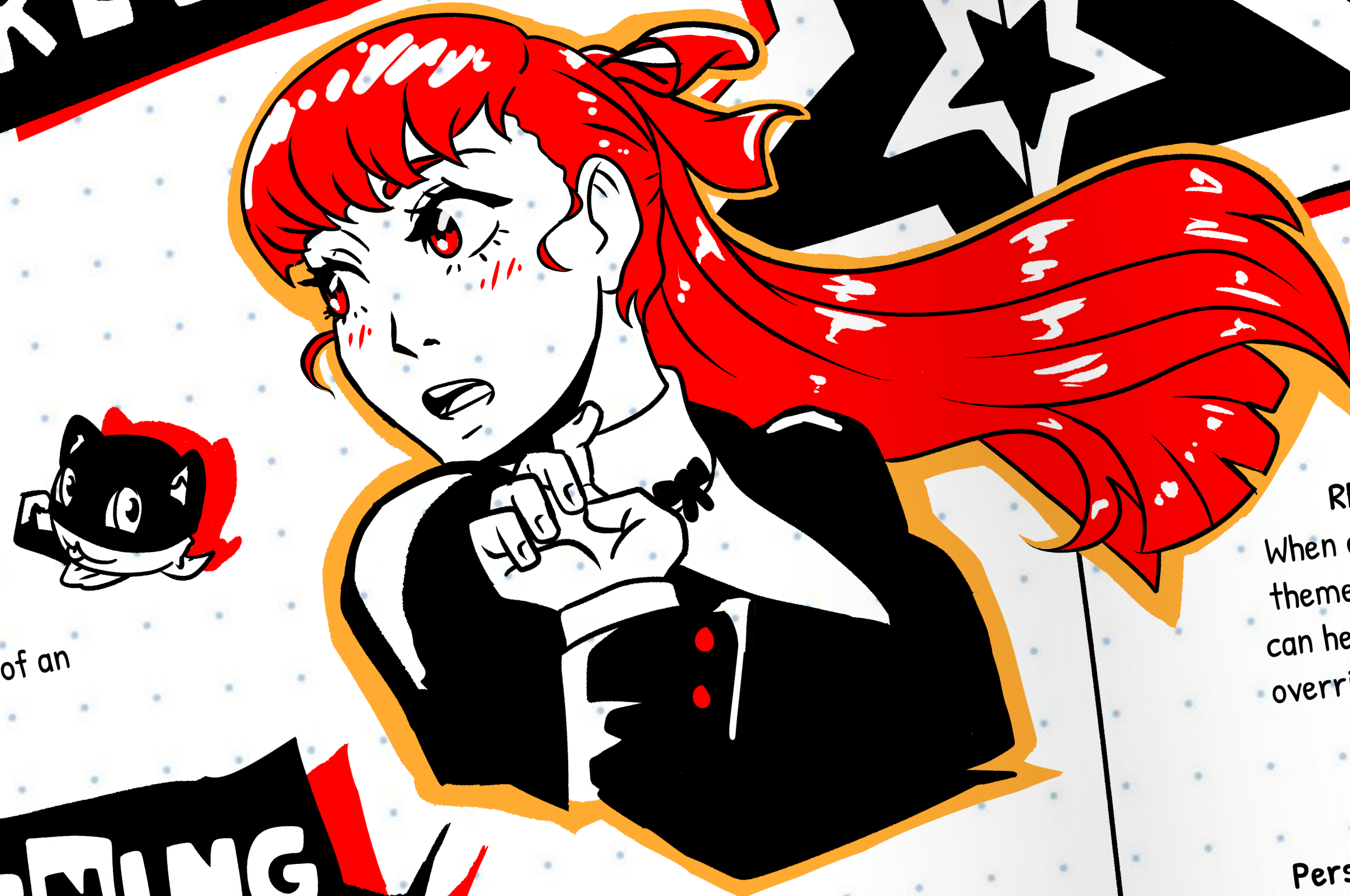
In Persona 5, the act of embracing your true self often manifests itself in the form of a mask that fuses to the individual's face. The people who awaken to their true selves would rip these masks from their faces. It's an intimate and painful process as skin is torn off and blood sprays everywhere. Very on the nose for Persona 5 but also very fitting for its style. And Sumire's awakening was no different. When she ripped off her mask, blood dripped from her face, as she slowly accepted the truth:

"I hung my head low and took your hand. But I knew all along, deep down...pretending to be Kasumi was not the right way...the weak, insecure Sumire dies today."

With the courage to accept her true self, her powers awakened. An ethereal voice reached out to her in a gentle whisper, not just for you, but the other girl within you as well.

"Such tenacity...it seems to fit you better than ever before... The scenery turned pure white and before her, stood her sister. With her hand outstretched, Kasumi reached out to her sister with a warm smile. It took a moment for it to register, but with a renewed vigor, Sumire smiled and took her hand.

"I am thou, thou art I. Are you prepared for your debut? The ball awaits."



STRONGEST ELEMENT

Kasumi's reveal as Sumire is easily one of Royal's strongest elements. It contextualizes Sumire's artificial characterization, revealing that she was trying to imitate the perfect sister she remembers. This makes subsequent playthroughs feel different now that the player knows the truth. Her character arc is a microcosm of the larger question posed by Persona 5: Royal:

Is it better to live in a world free of suffering, even if it means living in a lie, or is it better to accept the reality of the imperfect world that exists, even if it means carrying pain that comes with it?

LESSONS LEARNED

REMEMBER THE CENTRAL THEMES

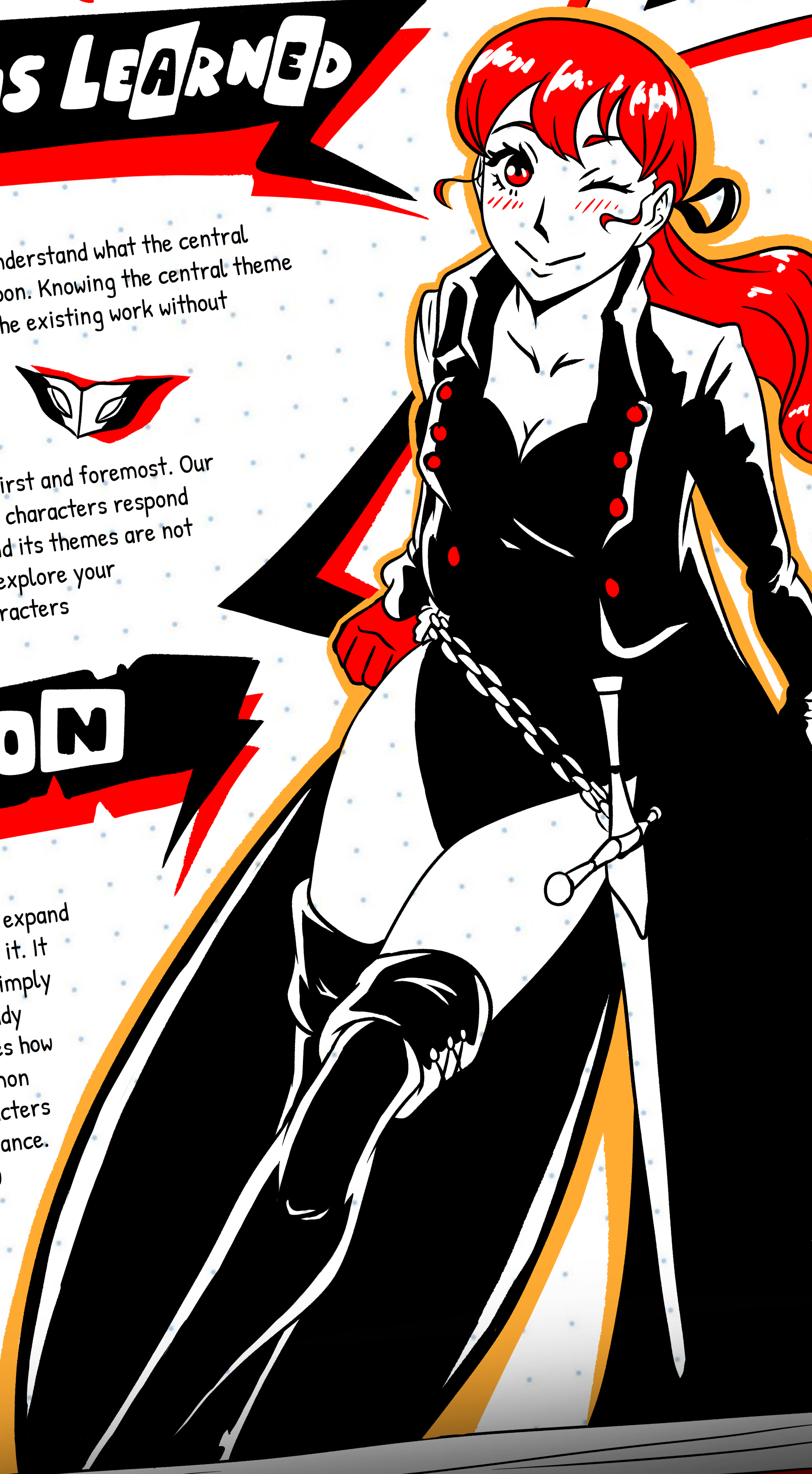
When extending any body of work, you need to understand what the central theme is. Not every game should be expanded upon. Knowing the central theme can help you to gauge how best to complement the existing work without overriding it.

THE CHARACTERS ARE THE KEY

Persona 5: Royal is a character-driven story first and foremost. Our investment is tied intrinsically to the way the characters respond to the events in the story. The story itself and its themes are not the focus, the characters are. If you want to explore your themes, let it flow naturally through the characters themselves.

SUMMATION

Persona 5: Royal is a good case study for how to expand upon an existing work without taking away from it. It does not overwrite what was already done, but simply asks further questions based on what was already established. Where the main storyline examines how apathy and ignorance can pervade in the common folk, Royal examines how even the main characters can fall victim to that same apathy and ignorance. Through their struggles, the game shows how difficult it can be to embrace a harsh truth.



VIOLET

WILL SANTOS

SMU GUILDHALL

WESANTOS@SMU.EDU

